

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 CAIRO 07983 111406Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----111423Z 015604 /44
O R 111337Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4949
INFO USINT BAGHDAD

S E C R E T CAIRO 7983

EXDIS

DEPT PASS SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, IZ, US
SUBJECT: IMPROVING RELATIONS WITH IRAQ

REF (A) STATE 106253 (TOSEC 40168), (B) CAIRO 7853

1. SPOKE TO FAHMY TODAY MAKING POINTS CONTAINED REFTEL.
I EXPLAINED NO RESPONSE YET RECEIVED FROM IRAQIS RE
UNDERSEC HABIB'S PROPOSED VISIT TO BAGHDAD, BUT WE
WOULD KEEP GOE INFORMED ABOUT DEVELOPMENTS.

2. FAHMY OPINED WE WILL NOT GET AN ANSWER FROM GOI.
IN HIS VIEW, WE HAD MADE TWO MISTAKES: FIRST, AT VERY
TIME IRAQIS INDICATED INTEREST IN IMPROVING RELATIONS,
WE HAD PUBLICLY CITED THEM IN LETTER TO SENATOR JAVITS
FOR SUPPORTING TERRORISM. WHETHER RIGHT OR WRONG, AND
FAHMY DID NOT QUESTION THAT THE IRAQIS ARE DOING SO,
THIS ACTION WILL GET UP IRAQI DANDER. SECOND, WITHOUT
ANY REFLECTION ON HABIB, WE SHOULD HAVE PROPOSED THAT
SECRETARY VANCE VISITED BAGHDAD. IF THIS WERE DONE,
FAHMY SAID, SADDAM HUSSEIN'S RESPONSE WOULD BE POSITIVE.
FAHMY THOUGHT THAT STOPOVER BY THE SECRETARY ESPECIALLY
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DESIRABLE AFTER USG'S "FLIRTING" WITH ASAD, WHICH MAKES
IRAQIS SUSPICIOUS.

3. TO UNDO DAMAGE CAUSED BY THE DEPT'S LETTER TO SENATOR
JAVITS, FAHMY PROPOSED THAT USINT BAGHDAD BE INSTRUCTED
WITHOUT DELAY TO EXPLIAN TO HIGHEST LEVEL IRAQI OFFICIAL
AVAILABLE WHY WE HAD HAD TO MAKE SUCH AN ANNOUNCEMENT.

IF PERSUASIVE, THIS WOULD HELP TO "ERASE" BAD EFFECT OF DEPT'S ANNOUNCEMENT. IF SUCH AN EXPLANATION COULD BE ACCOMPANIED BY AN OFFER THAT SECRETARY WILLING STOPOVER IN BAGHDAD, THIS WOULD PUT THE BALL IN THE IRAQI COURT. IF SADDAM HUSSEIN AGREES, AS FAHMY THOUGHT HE WOULD, IT WOULD BE A BREAK-THROUGH. WHILE SUCH A STOPOVER MIGHT NOT MEAN AN AUTOMATIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF RESUMPTION DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS, IT WOULD BE THE FIRST SIGNIFICANT STEP IN THIS DIRECTION.

4. TOLD FAHMY THAT I DID NOT KNOW WHETHER THE SECRETARY'S TIGHT SCHEDULE WOULD ALLOW SUCH A STOPOVER. MOREOVER, IT CLEARLY DESIRABLE FIRST PROBLE IRAQI INTENTIONS THROUGH UNDERSEC HABIB'S PROPOSED VISIT BEFORE ENGAGING SECRETARY'S PRESTIGE. FAHMY COUNTERED THAT, WHILE THIS WOULD EARLIER HAVE BEEN SOUND APPROACH, SITUATION HAD CHANGED IN WAKE OF DEPT'S LETTER TO SENATOR JAVITS. SOME EXTRAORDINARY EFFORT NOW NEEDED TO OVERCOME EFFECTS OF THAT LETTER.

5. FAHMY ASKED THAT HIS SUGGESTIONS BE CONVEYED TO THE SECRETARY, WHICH I AGREED TO DO. HE EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR OUR WILLINGNESS KEEP EGYPTIANS INFORMED OF DEVELOPMENTS. I AGAIN THANKED HIM FOR EGYPTIAN EFFORTS ON OUR BEHALF.
EILTS

NOTE: NOT PASSED SECRETARY.

SECRET

NNN

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